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CITY OF SAN DIEGO**

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City Takes Steps to Become More Prepared for Next Big Emergency

September declared "Prepare San Diego" Month

SAN DIEGO, California, Tuesday, Sept. 24, 2013 – This evening, the San Diego City Council took steps to help get the city more prepared for the next major emergency. Among the items heard at the special council meeting focused on emergency preparedness was an update to the City's Emergency Operations Plan.

"Since we are asking residents to make sure they are prepared for an emergency by getting a kit and making an emergency plan, the City needs to do the same," said San Diego City Councilman Mark Kersey.

Today's hearing was the first step toward updating the plan. It will now be brought to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee, chaired by Councilmember Marti Emerald, for further discussion.

"Providing safe neighborhoods to San Diegans is one of my top goals as the chair of the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee," said Councilmember Emerald.

Also at tonight's meeting, the Council heard about progress on a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the American Red Cross that would allow for the use of any City facility to be requested for use as an emergency shelter. Currently, the City only has existing MOUs on an individual facility basis and the use of other facilities requires additional approval by Council.

"Once approved, this will be a historic agreement between the American Red Cross and the City," Kersey said. "We know how quickly things can move in an emergency and this new agreement will cut some of the red tape to allow the Red Cross to help affected residents faster."

The agreement will be discussed at a future Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee meeting later this year.

Finally, Councilmembers Kersey and Emerald declared September to be "Prepare San Diego Month" in the City of San Diego. This proclamation recognizes the American Red Cross's regional effort to get one million San Diegans prepared for an emergency by "getting a kit, making a plan, or getting trained." More information on this effort is available at www.preparesandiego.org.

"I urge our communities to get involved with Prepare San Diego, a multi-year regional initiative driven by the American Red Cross," said Councilmember Emerald. "I look forward to discussing these important topics at a future Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee hearing."

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